

## **How 'conspiracy theory' in India made Canadian an online target; Right-wing outlets accused Vancouver group of paying singer to back farmers' protest**

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**Byline:** Joanna Chiu

### **Body**

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When singer Rihanna and climate activist Greta Thunberg tweeted Feb. 2 in support of farmers in India, their combined superstardom led to a global spike in attention to the months-long protests against new agriculture laws. This infuriated Indian government supporters, but rather than targeting the celebrities, almost every right-wing television network and publication in the country instead blamed one Canadian man. Mo Dhaliwal, a digital marketing startup director and co-founder of the grassroots rights advocacy group Poetic Justice Foundation, is accused of paying Rihanna \$2.5 million to support the farmers. Earlier, this Vancouver-based group had worked with members of the South Asian diaspora to launch a website with information on the protests, called AskIndiaWhy.com, which was referenced as part of a much larger list of online resources shared by Thunberg on Twitter. "This turned into a convoluted conspiracy theory that was spun out of thin air by pro-government media. A day later, I learned that we paid Rihanna \$2.5 million. That was an utter invention."

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